

"Insider Tips to Make Your Business Run Faster, Easier and More Profitably"

## What's New

November is the last full month of fall in the northern hemisphere. The birthstone for November is the yellow topaz, symbolizing friendship.

So, what's happening in November?

We sprang forward in March, and now it's time to fall back. Daylight saving time always ends on the first Sunday in November. Remember to set your clocks and watches back and enjoy an extra hour of sleep.

The 2021 London Remembrance Day Ceremony will be conducted again at the Cenotaph in Victoria Park. Participation is by invitation only this year, you can watch the ceremony on Rogers TV and CTV London.

The Santa Claus Parade is back on the streets this year. Saturday November 13<sup>th</sup>, starting at 6 p.m. on Dundas Street travelling west.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday (November 26<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>). Lenovo Canada will be promoting various sales; if you are looking for professional laptops or desktops give us a call, we will look to take advantage of these deals.

Happy November everyone!

## November 2021



This monthly publication provided by Stronghold I.T.

### Our Mission:

To create and build professional, valuable and exceptional relationships with our clients; to develop and implement the most appropriate and effective technology solutions and processes.



## What Is Co-Managed IT?

### Is It Right For You?

When it comes to IT solutions, most businesses rely on one of three options. They have a dedicated in-house IT employee or team, an outsourced managed services provider (MSP) or nothing at all. There is, however, a fourth option: **co-managed IT**.

This hybrid option gives you an on-site IT manager or a small team AND access to an off-site IT services firm. For any business that takes IT seriously, this can prove to be an efficient and reliable option. It's not as costly as a full on-site team, but it can be more comprehensive than relying on an MSP alone.

Simply put, the co-managed IT solution gives your business more options when it comes to getting IT and network stability and security *right*. It keeps you nimble when it comes to on-site issues. For instance, having an on-site IT manager means you have someone who knows the quirks of your business and its very specific needs.

But depending on the scope of your

business and the size of those needs, the job has the potential to get complicated fast. This is where having access to an off-site expert IT staff can be useful. An outsourced IT firm alleviates that pain point. Your IT manager has someone to call when they need to and suddenly you have a full IT staff.

These are experts in IT who understand a range of issues, from system management to industry regulations – and just about everything in between. They might not be familiar with the quirks or intricacies of your specific business or industry, but you already have that taken care of in the co-managed model.

### Co-Managed IT Brings Everything Together

You can have someone on-site who you can count on day to day, but when they need assistance, they have someone they can reliably call. They have access to an incredible knowledge and experience base. But it gets better!

*Continued on pg.2*

*Continued from pg.1*

One of the benefits of this approach is employee retention. Co-managed IT can completely shift your company culture for the better. Here's why: small or single-person IT teams can get overwhelmed and overworked *fast*. This is common in IT. As a result, small-business IT departments often seem like a revolving door for those employees. It creates a broken culture.

If your on-site team lacks access to the proper tools or resources, it won't take long for them to become overwhelmed and, eventually, burned out. If there's a crisis, like a ransomware attack or a storage failure, and your internal IT team isn't given the support they need to succeed, it puts undue stress on them.

While they might succeed in the end, they'll be unhappier for it and will likely start looking for a new job. With IT in such high demand, especially in 2021, it's likely they'll find another job, leaving you left to pick up the pieces.

Co-managed IT helps you avoid this. Plus, there are many other ways businesses can benefit from this hybrid model.

**You Have Someone Who Can Address Issues *Immediately*.** While you can generally rely on an MSP to deliver a quick response time, it might not always be as quick as you'd like or need. With this model, you have someone to get on the

issue in seconds – and they can bring in the MSP as needed.

**Having An IT Manager On-Site Puts Much Of The Responsibility On Their Shoulders.** While you can still be hands-on when it comes to your company's IT, they do what needs to be done, including coordinating with your MSP. This frees you up for everything and anything else.

**Regulatory Compliance Becomes A Breeze.** Depending on your industry, you may have to deal with all kinds of compliance terms and regulations. Your coordinated IT team is versed in everything they need to know – and they stay on top of it as things change.

**You Have To Hire Fewer People.** While you may have at least one person on staff, or maybe a small team, it's unlikely to grow any larger – and it doesn't need to. Not when your on-site team has access to all the tools, resources and expertise they need to get any IT job done.

**You Have A Healthier Company Culture.** This is a big one that often gets overlooked. When your on-site IT team has access to those outside resources, they're a lot happier. Happier employees are more likely to stick around for a longer period of time, adding to the overall stability of your business (plus, less frequent hiring is another way to keep costs down).

If you haven't yet considered co-managed IT, give it a look. You may find the IT solutions you've been looking for. And in a time when cyber security is more important than ever before – with more teams working remotely and cybercriminals working overtime – every business can use all the help they can get.

**“Simply put, the co-managed IT solution gives your business more options when it comes to getting IT and network stability and security right.”**

## Fact: Many Businesses Don't Have A Disaster Recovery Plan



- The importance of disaster recovery
- The lack of disaster recovery plans among small businesses
- The leading causes of data loss
- The costs of downtime

No business is truly immune to disasters, but preparing against them will go a long way in making your company resilient. Our comprehensive guide will show you how to do just that. Download our FREE eBook today, and drop us a line if you have any questions.

**Get your FREE copy today at**

**<https://www.stronghold.ca/recipe-for-disaster-recovery/>**

## Best Practices for Email

If you think your email is safe from hackers, think again. A lack of sufficient email security protocols can lead to data theft, unauthorized access to sensitive information, and malware attacks. Here are some tips to secure your email account from cyberthreats and the many troubles that come with them.

### Set strong passwords

Some email users often overlook the importance of having strong email account passwords. To keep all password-protected accounts safe, use strong passphrases that are unique to every account.

You should also consider enabling multifactor authentication. This creates an extra layer of security by requesting another method to verify your identity, like a fingerprint scan or an answer to a security question.

### Beware of email attachments and embedded links

When you see a link in an email, don't click on it unless you've verified its authenticity. You never know where those links might lead you. Sometimes they are safe, but other times they can infect your computer with malware or send you to a compromised website. Be wary of downloading and opening email attachments as well. If the attachment is coming from strange email account names such as "@yahoo6753.com," then it's likely unsafe.

### Watch out for phishing scams

In phishing scams, cybercriminals pretend to be someone else — commonly high-profile companies like Amazon, Facebook, or Bank of America — to trick you into performing actions that enable them to breach your accounts. They typically write emails intended to elicit panic, such as claiming that there's an issue with your account and that you should send them information or click on a link to "confirm" your personal details. This link will either install malware on your device or lead you to a fraudulent site.

It's important to remember that legitimate companies would never ask such requests over email.

## The Core Value Equation

Your core values are the most valuable asset you have. They help define your business, but more than that, they define your team and the work they put into the success of the business. That success can be broken down into the Core Value Equation.

**Core Values = Words = Conversations = Decisions = Actions = Results**

Or distilling it further: core values = results.

If you can define your values, everything that happens in your life is a direct correlation of your values, whether those things are good or bad. Your core values should be stated to and by your team, your customers should be aware of them — and they should be memorable.

Companies fail at core values when they are implemented poorly — or aren't implemented at all. In other words, they come up with a list of values and don't live up to them.

You and your employees should all be on the same page. You should see the core values around the office, they should be talked about regularly and they should be a part of the day-to-day aspects of your business. Don't let them just be words on paper. Give them real meaning!

Developing core values is a five-part process:

- 1. Discovery Process:** What matters most? Core values don't have to be "nice" — they need to be authentic to the company.
- 2. Design Process:** They need to be sticky, viral and memorable to the team — make a sign for the office and put them on the website.
- 3. Rollout Process:** You want customers and employees to fall in love with the core values, so make it all about them. Make sure that the core values are visible to the



company — on the wall, on the website or even in your email signature.

- 4. Implementation Process:** Have your team forget about past experiences with the company. Your core values are about reorienting and reenergizing your employees and getting them on the same page.

- 5. Measurement Process:** Survey your employees and get their feedback. Review employees based on a core value rating. Put it to work and make it tangible.

How can you make sure your team remembers the core values?

**Keep It Simple.** Miller's Law states that most adults can store between five and nine items in their short-term memory.

**Keep It Short.** Choose a word, then you can have a meaning behind those words.

**Keep It Clear.** Avoid jargon, keep it conversational and use words everyone uses.

With that, you have the foundation to develop a strong set of core values for your companies — core values that will define your team, who they are and their future success.



*Andy Bailey is the founder, CEO and lead business coach at Petra, an organization dedicated to helping business owners across the world achieve levels of success they never thought possible. With personal experience founding an Inc. 500 multimillion-dollar company that he then sold and exited, Bailey founded Petra to pass on the principles and practices he learned along the way. As his clients can attest, he can cut through organizational BS faster than a hot knife through butter.*



## ■ 3 Top SEO Myths Completely Busted!

### Myth 1: You Can Skip Mobile

**Optimization.** You may have spent a lot of time and money on your full website, but don't stop there.

Google cares about mobile optimization, as mobile search is quickly taking over desktop search, so Google wants to cater to those people. If you don't optimize for mobile, it will hurt your rankings.

### Myth 2: Links Are More Important

**Than Content.** Yes, linking is important, but you absolutely need solid content on your website to present yourself as a valid and credible site. Web users don't stick around websites with poor content or just links. And when users quickly leave, the value of your links drop. Quality content is key.

### Myth 3: Ranking Is More

**Important Than Anything Else.** Some businesses only care about being on Page 1 or in the top five search results, but making that happen can be incredibly difficult.

It's more important to entice the searching public to click on your content regardless of placement. It comes back to having quality content on your website, content that solves or answers a question (adds value) for the user. *Inc., Jan. 18, 2021*

## ■ Customer Service Employees And Negativity Don't Mix

When your customer service employees are in a bad mood, it can come across in their work. Customers may notice, which can reflect on your business. Even if you've hired a stellar customer service (CS) team, sometimes negativity breaks through. Here are the top reasons.

**They're Frustrated.** This is common for not just CS employees but also employees in any department. When they lack proper tools or resources and/or are understaffed, it leads to friction. Their job becomes much harder than it should be, and that doesn't take

long to show in customer-facing interactions.

**They Lack Training.** Sometimes the hiring process goes a little too quickly and CS employees are dropped into the role without full training. Even if they're experienced in CS, they need to know your expectations and how you do things.

**They Lack Support.** This is the most important. Every employee needs support to succeed. In a CS position, lack of support can hurt your overall business. Be flexible and be there for your team to meet their needs. *Forbes, Jan. 16, 2021*

## ■ Why You Need To Unplug Every Once In A While

Putting down the phone, stepping away from the computer and turning off the TV can do wonders. Here are just a few of the benefits you can experience.

**It Reduces Stress.** The news and social media is packed with negativity. When you cut yourself off from the negativity, the stress melts away.

**It Boosts Productivity.** We live in the era of information overload. Spending too much time behind a screen clutters our brains and slows us down. Take a break to get perspective and regain focus.

**It Just Helps You Feel Better.** It gives your brain a chance to rest. Blue light given off by screens is overstimulating. Turning off the screen gives you a chance to recuperate mentally, emotionally and even physically.

*Forbes, Jan. 15, 2021*

